

REMARKS

Claims 30-36 are pending in the present application. In the Office Action dated May 23, 2006, claims 30, 31, 33, 34, and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,067,561 to Dillon ("Dillon") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,275,848 to Arnold ("Arnold"), and what is well known in the art. Claim 32 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dillon and Arnold in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,385,644 to Devine et al. ("Devine"). Claim 36 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dillon and Arnold, and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,317,485 to Homan et al. ("Homan").

The embodiments disclosed in the present application will now be discussed in comparison to the cited references. Of course, the discussion of the disclosed embodiments, and the discussion of the differences between the disclosed embodiments and the cited references, does not define the scope or interpretation of any of the claims. Instead, such discussed differences merely help the Examiner appreciate important claim distinctions discussed thereafter.

The present application discloses a method and system for securely distributing an Email communication to multiple individual recipients in an efficient manner using centralized storage and management. According to one embodiment, the method includes receiving an Email communication containing an indication of the recipient(s) for the message, and making a determination whether the indication is for multiple recipients. Unlike conventional methods, the present method uses an email communication program that makes a conditional decision that if the indication is for multiple recipients, the program does not send the Email communication to the recipients, but rather centrally stores the Email communication on a server, and sends only a short notification of the Email communication to each of the multiple recipients without sending the Email communication itself. Thus, a single copy of the Email communication can be stored on a server computer for delivery on an individual basis to multiple recipients when requested.

In one embodiment, the present application is directed toward message action instructions that can affect the single copy of the Email communication. The message action

instructions may be used by the recipient to delete or forward the single copy of the Email communication from the server or to flag the Email communication to remain saved to the server. This provides the recipient with the power to manage the single copy Email messages on the server. In addition, a Message Tracker component receives requests, instructions and other information from a Message Receiver component and tracks the status of the various messages. When the Message Tracker receives a message action instruction from a recipient such as to save or delete a message, the message tracker updates the Message Tracker Table to reflect that information.

The Examiner has cited the Dillon reference in view of Arnold. Dillon is directed to sending notifications (alerts) of Email messages to recipients using a hybrid network that transmits notifications via a continuous high speed channel. Other than these features and in particular, the features regarding how the alerts are sent, the handling of messages as taught by Dillon is conventional in the art.

The Examiner acknowledges that Dillon fails to teach or suggest an Email communication program configured with instructions to store a single copy of the Email communication on the server if the Email is designated for a plurality of recipients. To remedy the deficiencies of Dillon, the Examiner has cited Arnold. The Arnold reference is directed toward detaching attachments from Email messages based on size (or other criteria), storing the attachment to a server, inserting a pointer in the text of the Email message which directs the recipients to the appropriate Web site, sending all the designated recipients the Email message without the attachment, and allowing the recipients access to the stored attachment through the pointer in the Email message. The Arnold reference fails to disclose or fairly suggest the capability of each individual recipient to control the saving, deleting or forwarding of the attachment, except in the situation where the sender has provided authority to do so in advance. Even when the Arnold reference does refer to recipients saving the attachment, it is editing the attachment and saving the changes and not that the recipient has the control to say that the attachment should remain saved on the server. In addition, the Arnold reference fails to disclose or fairly suggest the capability of tracking each recipients request to delete, save, or forward the attachment.

Turning now to the claims, the patentably distinct differences between the cited references and the claim language will be specifically pointed out. Currently amended claim 30 recites, in part, “controlling message action instructions for the single copy of the Email communication *by any one of the plurality of recipients*, the message action instructions includes at least one of deleting, saving, and forwarding.” (*Emphasis added*). Currently amended claim 30 is directed toward allowing any one of the plurality of recipients to delete, save and/or forward the Email communication. Neither of the cited references teach such a limitation. The Arnold reference discloses that the recipient, in certain circumstances, may be given authority by the sender to make changes to the attachment and save those changes to the server, but does not disclose or fairly suggest that any recipient may delete the attachment from the server or indicate that he/she wants the attachment to remain saved on the server. Therefore, currently amended independent claim 30 is allowable over the Dillon reference in view of the Arnold reference.

New independent claim 45 recites, in part, “tracking each recipient’s delete or save instruction.” Claim 45 is directed toward a tracking system that tracks each recipient’s disposition of the various Email communications. Neither of the cited references teach such a limitation. The Arnold reference does disclose an access list used to confirm that the recipient is on the access list; however, it does not track the recipient’s disposition of the Email communications. In contrast, claim 45 is capable of tracking each recipient’s disposition for each Email communication. Therefore, new independent claim 45 is allowable over the Dillon reference in view of the Arnold reference.

The claims depending from the above-discussed independent claims are also patentable because of their dependency from patentable independent claims and because of the additional limitations recited in the dependent claims.

All of the claims in the application are clearly allowable. Favorable consideration and a timely Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Fee Transmittal Sheet (+ copy)

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